



NEWS

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SUMMIT FOCUSES ON SAFE MOBILITY FOR SENIORS

This week California will observe the third annual "Senior Safe Mobility Week" as proclaimed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to show senior citizens how to keep driving safely and to reinforce the importance of preparing for the time when driving may have to stop.

"The California Highway Patrol's primary mission is saving lives," said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. "We have traffic safety programs geared toward all age groups. For most seniors, we don't expect them to stop driving, and we want them to continue to drive as long as they're safe."

The week's premiere event is a 1½ day summit at the Hyatt Regency in the city of Irvine on Tuesday and Wednesday. State traffic safety officials from CHP, Caltrans, Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Office of Traffic Safety will join educators, doctors, researchers, aging specialists, transportation providers, therapists and others to present the latest information on senior driving and mobility issues. The summit's keynote speaker will be Dr. David Manning, regional administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In his proclamation, Governor Schwarzenegger stated: "Road safety is an important issue for all of us, and this week, we pause to consider our wonderful senior citizens and some of the unique challenges they face when it comes to transportation. The aging process affects people in different ways and can have an impact on a person's ability to drive. It is important that we raise awareness about the safety concerns associated with senior drivers, as well as explore alternative ways of getting around."

Commissioner Farrow credited the Older California Traffic Safety Task Force (OCTS) partnership with taking proactive measures to promote "progress on many fronts, including educational ventures, police training, highway engineering innovations and advanced driver licensing research." The OCTS Task Force has been in existence for several years and brings together important resources from the public and the private sector to address senior driving and transportation issues.

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The Commissioner said that the summit will not only bring an important perspective of how to assist seniors, but will also offer all Californians a more complete picture of how aging affects driving.

"One thing we know already - as you get older your motor skills and reaction time begin to diminish, and you do not want to compromise your safety as well as the safety of others out there on the road," Commissioner Farrow said. "Some seniors can drive safely into very old age, and some must stop before that time. Our job is to ensure safety and help to find alternatives when driving is no longer possible. We need public support to make that happen."

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